United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/840
5 March 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Iraq protests to United Nations against acts of what it calls "flagrant and unjustified provocations" by United States military.

- International Committee of Red Cross informs United Nations of release by Iraq of further 35 prisoners of war.

- Ways of helping almost 3 million migrant workers and their families who have fled from Gulf region are discussed at International Labour Organisation session in Geneva.

- International Maritime Organization calls for Gulf pollution disaster fund.

- Commission adopts resolution calling for women to fill 35 per cent of United Nations Professional posts by 1995.

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The Government of Iraq has protested to the United Nations against two acts of what it calls "flagrant and unjustified provocations" by the United States military.

In a letter to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz complained about United States aircraft, which he said had deliberately broken the sound barrier over Baghdad four times, "terrorizing" civilians, particularly children. He said the terror was a result of the loud noise and the shaking of buildings and houses produced by the aircraft.

The Iraqi Minister also complained that armed United States troops had been discharged from six helicopters on the Baghdad-Amman road in an area which, he said, was distant from the theatre of operations.

The Government of Iraq condemned those acts saying they were inconsistent with the agreement reached between allied troops and Iraq at a military meeting at Safwan last Saturday.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

In a separate development, a United Nations official said today that the President of the Security Council, Peter Hohenfellner (Austria), was holding bilateral consultations with Council members on a number of issues, including preparation of reports on the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), Western Sahara and the occupied Arab territories. The President was scheduled to meet later this afternoon with the Iraqi Ambassador, Abdul Amir A. Al-Anbari.

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The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has informed the United Nations that Iraq handed over 35 prisoners of war this morning in Baghdad.

The prisoners -- 15 American, 9 British, 9 Saudi, 1 Italian and 1 Kuwaiti -- were to be flown to Riyadh by the Red Cross, to meet representatives of their respective countries as soon as weather conditions permitted.

Yesterday, the Committee announced that 10 prisoners of war released by Iraq had been collected, and were being taken to Amman where they were to be handed over to their respective Governments.

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Ways of helping the almost 3 million migrant workers and their families who had fled from the Gulf region have been discussed at the spring session in Geneva of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

At the session, which ended on Friday, participants addressed the dramatic situation of many of those workers and their families in Kuwait and Iraq who had fled the area as a result of the Gulf crisis and had suffered considerable losses in terms of unpaid salaries and lost effects and savings. Having returned to their countries of origin, they were now facing serious employment problems.

Among those addressing the session, ILO Director-General Michel Hansenne said the crisis had made clear to all that the migration system in the region was flawed. He said the time had come to bring the recruitment and employment of migrant workers closer to ILO standards in countries of employment as well as in countries of origin. The ILO was willing to help any country in that respect.

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A call for the establishment of an international fund to help combat the oil spill in the Gulf was made today by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nations agency concerned with maritime safety and the prevention of pollution from ships.

(more)

The primary purpose of the fund would be to facilitate fielding of equipment and services offered in recent weeks so as to catalyse efforts now being made by coastal States to tackle the disaster.

When the disaster first became apparent at the end of January, IMO established a centre at its London headquarters to coordinate the international response. Many countries offered assistance to States in the Gulf region through IMO, as envisaged in the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation 1990. That Convention was adopted at a conference convened by IMO in November and is intended to establish an international system for responding to oil spill disasters such as the one in the Gulf.

Current indications are that the spill consists of between 1.5 and 2 million barrels of oil, making it one of the worst spills ever.

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The Commission on the Status of Women, now in session in Vienna, has adopted a draft text calling for women to fill 35 per cent of United Nations Professional posts by 1995.

By the text, the Economic and Social Council would urge the Secretary-General to increase the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution, especially at the senior policy and decision-making levels.

The Council would also urged the Secretary-General to accord priority to increasing the participation rate of women to 25 per cent in senior management posts at the D-1 level and above, taking into consideration those from developing countries and countries with a small representation of women.

The Commission also continued debate on the priority themes of equality, development and peace, focusing on the problems of refugee and displaced women and children, young women and the integration of women in the development process.

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